

## With the First Nighters.

### AND NOW D'ANNUNZIO.

Florence Roberts returns to play "Gloconda," "Sapho," "The Unwelcome Mrs. Hatch" and the Augustin Daly version of the "Country Girl" called "Peggy Thrift." Of these, most of which are familiar, just one stands out with particular interest—"Gloconda." We have been patient through the story of Mrs. Alving, we stood for Maslova's stormy life, and the disagreeable picture of Mary of Magdala, and now we're to have another dose in the shape of "Gloconda," a freak of D'Annunzio's poisonous literature.

In all of these, the opportunity for the woman who plays the part is a wonderful one, and the public crowds to see, but what kind of a sign of the times is it when the degenerate products of a poetic mind which is unhappy unless picturing the obscene, are the only plays that succeed. The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters for sure, and there is a low, morbid streak in most of us, that causes us to crave for the shady, disagreeable stories of life, and the wiseacre critic tells you next morning of the great moral lesson the story conveys.

For instance, the story of "Gloconda" is this: An Italian sculptor loves his wife and child, and is also deeply enamored with his model who makes his greatest statue a possibility. He cannot master the double-barreled emotion, so tries to commit suicide, but fails.

His wife nurses him back to life and she mistakes gratitude for love. She commands his mistress, the model, to go away, and in a terrible scene which follows, the mistress attempts to destroy the statue, the wife receiving such injuries in its protection that she loses both hands.

And this is what the lover of Eleanore Duse, D'Annunzio dedicated to her. The theme is handled in a masterly manner by the poet, and it is said Miss Roberts rises to the occasion beautifully, but bah—give us the surfelt of rag-time, if we are to have nothing else but the vile concoctions handed out by a school of authors who lose sight of the sunshine of the world in their exultation over moral disease.

### THE MASLOVA OF WALSH.

Tolstoy is a merciless chronicler. He walks boldly into the haunts of the defiled, and with a severity as relentless as Ibsen's and which has in it something of the rigor of the tempests that lash the kingdom of the Czar, he tells the story of the luckless lives of the tormented with a pitiless realism. In the "Resurrection," the great Russian socialist is never didactic and does not preach a sermon. He merely paints a stern picture in colors which are almost haunting in their somberness.

Blanche Walsh as Maslova, the hopeless and shameless Siberian convict on whose face is written the tragedy of moral abandonment, has ample chance for the exploitation of her great art. The innocent girl of the prologue and the wrecked counterpart of the Siberian inferno were portrayed with uniform intensity and repression. But no one can enthuse over the spectacle of femininity fallen so low, even when illumined with an art as fine as Miss Walsh's, and it is a real relief when the curtain goes down on the last bleak scene, where Maslova refuses to marry the princely wrongdoer, while confessing her love for him, and Dimitri leaves her to return to a later love and his princely home. The support is even and capable, although Mr. Alexander Von Mitzel does not always rise to the opportunities of the part and his art has a much paler tinge than that of the late Joseph Howarth, who was the Dimitri of Miss Walsh's first production of

the play. Also it may be added that Miss Walsh has neither the grace nor charm of ten years ago, and her step is about as elastic as the amble of a west side charwoman.

### FISKE.

The beauty and the power of such a drama as Mary of Magdala as played by that marvelous woman, Minnie Maddern Fiske, is fascinating in its intensity and compelling in the interest that follows the evolution of the story.



FLORENCE ROBERTS.

Mrs. Fiske makes it so, but no one can say why, and there's the phenomenal part of it. For she has a subtle magnetism that holds her hearers with breathless interest rather by the things she leaves unsaid, and the suppressed emotions, than anything she may do or say.

But though at times her enunciation seems imperfect, and the nervous twitch of her mouth is a constant reminder of her greatest work—the portrayal of Becky Sharp—the depth of poetry in her voice overshadows every other charm.

Mrs. Fiske is highly intellectual and she is equally artistic, and for those reasons her appearance in the opening scenes of Mary of Magdala is disappointing, because she seems passionless, too much so for a wanton, and the impression must be gained by the color of the scene.

And speaking of the color, the whole story is told in the shades she affects from the purpleish red of the bejeweled courtesan to the spotless white she wears in the closing scene of the play. The audience was spellbound, reverential, applauding little, held by this story woven around the life of the Master. There was everything to command, and nothing to offend the most reli-

gious enthusiast, and the production was a work of art. The Judas of Hobart Bosworth was nicely done, though he has a tendency to rant in this very intense part. Frank Gilmore as Aulus Plautius created a splendid impression, with his strong manly bearing, and easy, natural stage presence. There never has been a better mob scene on a local stage than that in this play, and the final act in the ravine near Jerusalem is a powerful example of the realism of modern stagecraft.

### HERALD BAUER.

Under the auspices of the Philharmonic Guaranteeing Society, the wonderful pianist, Harold Bauer, will be heard at the First Congregational church on the evening of March 28th.

He has recently taken San Francisco by storm, as witness what Blanche Partington says in the San Francisco Call:

When is a piano not a piano?

When it is an orchestra, with Harold Bauer at the baton!

Mr. Bauer's "Walkurenritt" of last night's recital—his own and a brilliant arrangement, by the way—set one to suspecting the superfluities of the orchestra. It was superbly adequate as a transcription and played with a wild sweep, a massive volume of tone—marvelously differentiated in color—that gave the noble turmoil of the Walkyrie ride with true orchestral magnificence.

The applause that followed bordered on the hysterical.

### A FINE CONCERT.

The efforts of John Held and his band to furnish a musical program of standard excellence once a week, was apparently never more appreciated than last Sunday evening, and the organization with its additional attractions grows in favor week by week. The Enterpe Ladies' Quartette was the feature of the last concert, and the duet for cornets by Messrs. Johnson and Leslie, and the cornet solos by Mr. Held were of a very high order. The band was especially pleasing in the variety of music, and the rendition of the selections.

A great concert is in preparation for April 24th.

### THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

There are reasons why "The Old Homestead" has been so successful for nearly twenty years. One of the most important of them is that the characters are drawn from real life. The audience seems to appreciate the fact that Cy Prime, Aunt Matilda, Seth Perkins, Rickety Ann, Eb Ganzey, and old Uncle Josh are real live people and not fictions of the author's imagination. Denman Thompson lived among these people for many years before he gave "Uncle Josh" to the stage. He became intimate with their daily life, and he made copious notes of the humorous and pathetic incidents with which New England country life is crowded. And so the thing seemed to grow in his mind as the years went by, until he had prepared a series of pictures (living pictures, in the truest sense of the word), which became in time the finished drama and which he aptly called "The Old Homestead," thereby giving to the stage one of the most successful plays of this generation. And Denman Thompson himself, one of the most interesting characters on the stage is with the production.

### FUDGE.

Mansfield, the greatest living actor, does it in his "Julius Caesar," Mrs. Fiske, the greatest living actress, does it in "Mary of Magdala."—Local Exchange.

The greatest living actress—Well, well, well.